

## *Environmental Issues*

In large part because of its varied landscape, Pakistan also possesses diverse wildlife and plant life species. Of its plant life species, many are actually medicinal in value and are, therefore, a valuable resource in the global sphere. In addition, Pakistan is home to certain natural energy resources, such as natural gas reserves.

Pakistan, however, has high population density, which has been a contributory factor to its environmental problems. Poor agricultural practices and limited forest resources have contributed to a host of problems such as deforestation, erosion, land degradation and desertification. In addition, increased industrialization has contributed to pollution by pesticides, fertilizers and other chemical toxins. Coastal pollution from oil spills is also prevalent.

Key current environmental issues in Pakistan include the following:

- water pollution, from raw sewage, chemicals and pesticides, industrial wastes and agricultural runoff
- limited natural fresh water resources
- inadequate access to potable water
- deforestation
- soil erosion
- desertification
- overgrazing
- overharvesting
- land degradation, as a result of wind and water erosion
- poor water treatment and inadequate sewage facilities
- marine and coastal pollution

Major natural hazards in Pakistan include frequent earthquakes, occasionally severe especially in north and west, and flooding along the Indus after heavy rains (July and August).

Regulation and protection of the environment in Pakistan comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment, Local Government and Rural Development, Ministry of Water and Power, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources, and the Sundh Wildlife Management Board.

The major international agreements which Pakistan is party to include international agreements: party to - Biodiversity, Climate Change, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Nuclear Test Ban, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, and Wetlands. The Desertification, Law of the Sea, and Marine Life Conservation agreements are signed, but not ratified.

### Major Environmental Organizations

The major non-governmental environmental organizations are: The Scientific and Cultural Society of Pakistan, The World Conservation Union-Pakistan Programme and World Wide Fund for Nature-Pakistan. In addition Talimul Island College houses Herp Laboratory that has the aim of recording herpetofauna (snakes) as accurately as possible, region by region.

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